

January 5, 2009

E-19J

Jeanne Higgins, Forest Supervisor
Great Divide Ranger District
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
68 South Stevens Street
Rhineland, Wisconsin 54501

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Proposed Cayuga Project on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Great Divide Ranger District, Ashland County, Wisconsin - EIS No. 20080487

Dear Ms. Higgins:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the Final EIS and ROD for the Cayuga Project. The proposed project results from the need to implement the current Forest Plan and move forest resources toward the desired future conditions for the Management Areas located in the analysis area.

The U.S. EPA rated the Revised Draft EIS Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information in our June 23, 2008 comment letter. Our comment letter expressed concern about the viability of the marten population based on the actions proposed for occupied marten habitat in Alternative 2. The Biological Evaluation for Regional Forester Sensitive Species and information contained in the revised Draft EIS indicated Alternative 6 should not negatively impact the viability of marten. Based on the information contained in the two documents, we recommended the US Forest Service select Alternative 6 as the Preferred Alternative for this project.

From our review of the ROD and Final EIS, we understand that Alternative 7 will be implemented. Alternative 7 combines Alternatives 5 and 6 as stated in the Draft EIS and incorporates additional provisions designed to reduce impacts to marten habitat. We believe the information contained in the ROD and Final EIS adequately addresses the comment stated in our Draft EIS comment letter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Kathy Kowal of my staff at (312) 353-5206 or via e-mail at kowal.kathleen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kenneth A. Westlake

Kenneth A. Westlake, Supervisor
NEPA Implementation
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

cc: Jim McDonald, Regional Environmental Coordinator,
U.S. Forest Service